

I urge your support for SB 144

I am a retired county noxious weed management coordinator, and have been actively involved in noxious weed management from the local to the national level for the past forty years.

I have been a firm supporter of the Trust Fund since its beginning, and continue to believe that it has been and is providing a tremendous support to the people of Montana in our efforts to manage the very serious noxious weed infestations plaguing our state. The primary intent of this program is to provide direct support to the people of Montana through grants to cooperative projects combating noxious weeds, with a portion also going to support research into developing new tools in this effort and education to foster a more effective coordinated effort in our overall noxious weed management program in Montana. The Montana Department of Agriculture has been charged with administering this program for what most grant programs would consider a very generous 12% of the money generated by the program for distribution.

Over the years as the program has developed, the portion of the dollars going to the Department of Agriculture has grown considerably past the intended 12%, and thus shrunk the dollars going to the people of Montana. While I agree that the programs funded within the Department by trust fund dollars are important, I more strongly believe that they should be funded through the regular state budgeting process. The Trust Fund was intended to provide support to the people of Montana, not support for their government.

I again urge your support of SB 144, and thank you for your consideration.

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